DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 244 132 CE 038 969

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TITLE People on the Farm: Raising Beef Cattle.
INSTITUTION Department of Agriculture, Washington, DC. Office of Governmental and Public Affairs.
PUB DATE Dec 78
NOTE 29p.; For related documents, see CE 038 960-968.
AVAILABLE FROM Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, DC 20492 (Stock No. 001-003-00035-6). A slide/cassette presentation developed to accompany this unit is available through the Photography Division, Governmental and Public Affairs Office, USDA, Washington, DC 20250 ($29.50).
PUB TYPE Guides - Classroom Use - Materials (For Learner) (051) -- Reports - Descriptive (141)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Agricultural Education; Agricultural Skills; Animal Husbandry; *Career Choice; Career Development; *Career Education; Family Environment; Family Income; *Farmers; *Farm Management; Field Crops; *Job Skills; Profiles; Secondary Education; Values
IDENTIFIERS *Beef Cattle; Colorado; Missouri

ABSTRACT

This booklet provides information on raising beef cattle through profiles of two families, the Ritschards of Colorado and the Schuttes of Missouri. Through descriptions of daily life for these families, the booklet discusses the way of life on modern beef cattle farms and the problems and decisions faced by farmers. The booklet explains how agriculture fits into the national economy and illustrates major economic concepts: supply and demand, impact of technology, division of labor, and the role of government in farming. Through the daily activities of these families, the booklet provides information on the skills, lifestyle, income, and values needed by persons who are successful in such a career. The booklet is illustrated with photographs of the families at work on their farms. (KC)

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PEOPLE ON THE FARM: RAISING BEEF CATTLE

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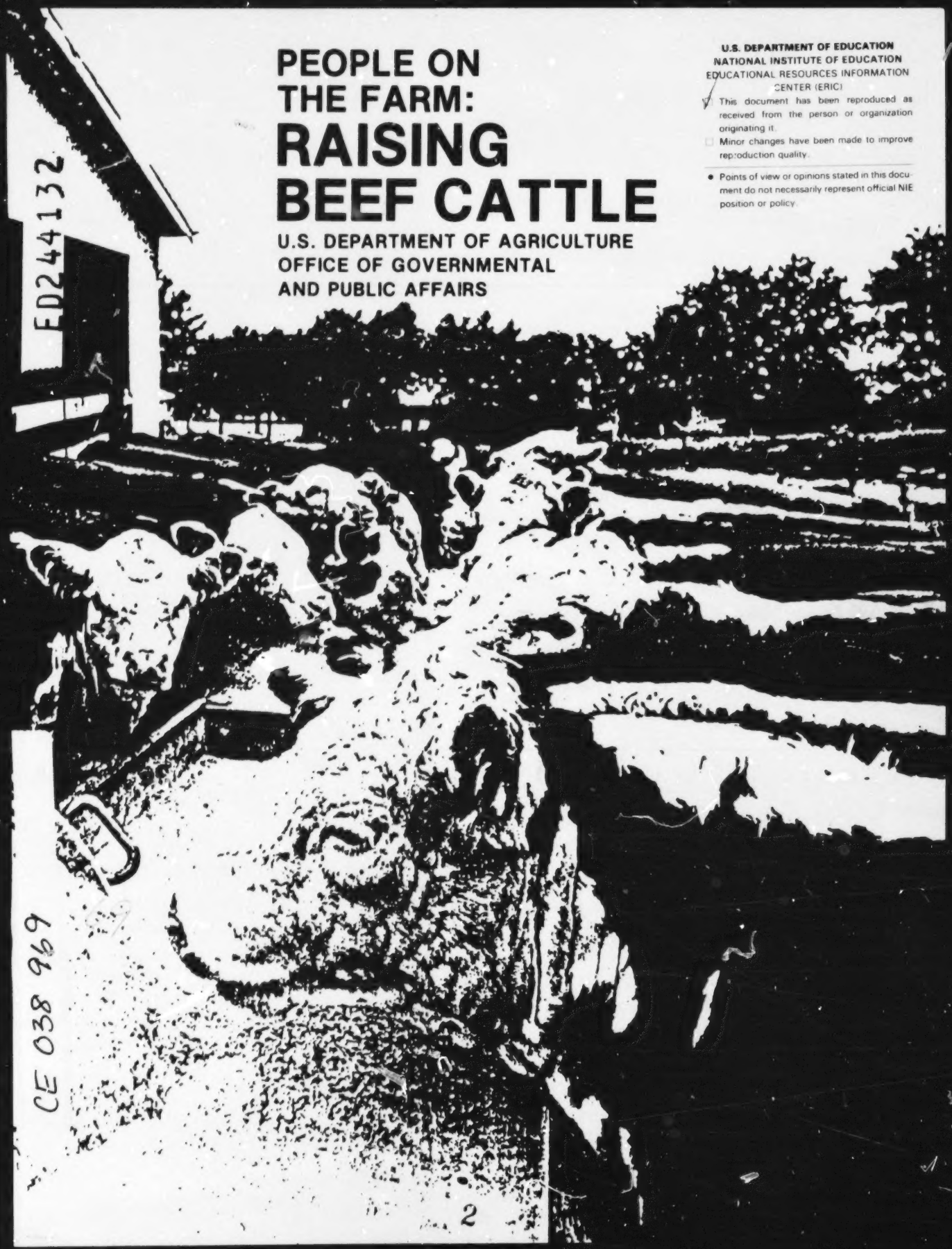

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BRIEFLY . . . .

This booklet recounts visits with two families out where beef begins. One lives on a ranch, the other on a farm.

Even though they graze 400 cows, the Ritschards of Colorado say there are no cowboys living on their ranch or anywhere near them—and certainly no Indians. Yet, they ride superbly trained cattle horses through sagebrush to round up cows and calves, they brand calves every spring, they drive their cattle to the high ground for summer grazing, and they perform countless other tasks that sound like words torn out of a Western movie script.

Instead of 10-gallon hats, though, they sport those caps with a company's name on the front—modern billboards of agricultural advertising.

Herbert Schutte, who raises cattle in Missouri, wears a cap too. But he rounds up his 50 cows and their calves with a pickup truck or on foot. There's no sagebrush visible on his farm. Some nights, though, the yipping and howling of the coyotes in the nearby woods make it sound like a Western movie at his place, Herbert says.

It is on such ranches and farms that America's beef supply begins.

Yet, each operation is different. The Schuttes have fewer cows and less land than the Ritschards, but they grow hay, corn, and soybeans and raise some hogs in addition to the beef cattle. The Ritschards raise cattle and grow hay exclusively, though they pursue plenty of nonranch activities.

So it goes across the country.

In Texas, where more beef calves are produced than in any other State, a typical cattleman keeps about 300 cows grazing on privately owned range. He doesn't grow any crops—just grazes cattle.

In the Southeast, a typical cow-calf farmer would keep a herd of 50 cows grazing in his pasture and woods, and would grow grain and soybeans for sale.

Up in Montana and Wyoming, a typical rancher would keep a herd of 150 cows munching on native grasses and shrubs. They would graze on public land in the summer and on private land the rest of the year.

Farther west and south, between the Rockies and the Sierra Nevada, a typical 300-cow herd would probably graze on desert shrubs, native grasses, and sagebrush on Government land much of the year and on private land the rest.

This is the story of two families—of how the Ritschards and the Schuttes raise beef in Colorado and Missouri.

PEOPLE ON THE FARM: RAISING BEEF CATTLE

Ranching Along the Colorado

The picture window in Mimi Ritschard's living room actually provides a picture. A line of cottonwood trees alongside the silvery Colorado River divides green meadows from brown rolling hills about a third of the way up. Above the hills white puffy clouds float through a clear blue sky. Below the river in the "picture," and closer to Mimi's home, are first meadows, then a two-lane highway, then the corral. It is in this corral that heifers are kept as they calve for the first time.

For a few weeks each spring, the corral is alive with calving and nursing cows and their hungry offspring. During the day, it is Mimi's job, between cleaning a house, working in the community, and selling modular homes, to keep alert to problems in this combination maternity ward and nursery.

A city girl who became a rancher's wife, Mimi saved several calves in the spring of 1977.

One calf was born with the afterbirth sack over its head. Mimi burst the sack and reached down the calf's throat to clean out an air passage. She tickled the wet animal's nose with a straw. She pushed on its chest. She did everything.

Finally, the calf began to breathe.

"I didn't think you'd make it with that one," said a voice behind her at the time. "Good for you."

Mimi's husband Gene had walked up behind her quietly and watched her fight to save the calf's life. She's a registered nurse and that helps. But Mimi says she learned most of what she knows about calving from her husband.

Mimi met Gene when her folks moved to Kremmling, Colorado from San Francisco.

Gene said he "noticed her around" one summer, called her on the telephone, and asked for a date. Later, after her sophomore year at Arizona State University, they were married. He had aleady received his bachelor's degree from Colorado State University, but went to Arizona State with his bride so he could start working on his master's degree. His mother always encouraged him to prepare for a second career—in case he was hurt on the ranch.

But Gene lasted only a year at Arizona State.

"I can't stand it," he said to Mimi in October. "I miss the

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The first home for many new calves born on the Ritschard Ranch in Colorado is the corral in front of Gene and Mimi Ritschard's home beside U.S. Highway 40, just east of Kremmling. From the corral, the calves are moved with their mothers to pastures beyond the highway. beside the Colorado River. Lindee uses this early morning light to catch up on homework before school bus arrives.

ranch. You stay here and finish. I'm going home."

So Mimi stayed, got her nursing degree, then joined Gene on the ranch.

Now they have four children: Mike, 14; Lindee, 13; Julie, 11; and Kristie, 7.

It was Kristie who came out to the corral where grandpa, 65-year-old Con Ritschard, was tending an injured cow this morning. She brought a pail of water.

Child and rancher greeted each other with a warm hug. Then Kristie put the bucket of water in front of the disabled cow. Con walked to his home nearby for breakfast.

Kristie and Con's other grandchildren, after feeding the disabled cow, the steers they were raising as 4-H projects this year, a milk cow, the horses, and themselves, caught the school bus on U.S. 40. The highway, which runs almost from coast to coast, goes right past the front of their home.

Con's wife Gladys had prepared the couple's breakfast, just as she had done—good times and bad—for 45 years. On this day after breakfast, she would drive 40 miles to join in a card game. She's been playing bridge since college days, before she met Con Ritschard nearly half a century ago.

Gladys, while not working as hard as she used to, acts as treasurer of the Ritschard ranch business, pays most of the bills, and helps out in other ways when needed.

She writes pioneer stories for local newspapers (after all, she was born in Cripple Creek, "the last of the gold rush towns," where her mother died when Gladys was 5 and her dad was drowned when she was 9).

She was the first woman president of the local Pioneer Society, despite the seeming prohibition in that organization's bylaws which declared in plain 1919 English, "we'll let the females come (to the meetings) once in a while."

"Gladys' presidency would make the old folks turn over in their graves," Con muses.

Gladys has also been active in the PTA, the Girl Scouts, and the county fair.

Beyond the highway in front of the Ritschards' homes, the waters of the Colorado River are just beginning their spectacular run toward the Grand Canyon, the Gulf of California, and, through an aqueduct, to the city of Los Angeles. Water that runs past the ranch might very well slake the thirst of some Los Angeles high school student a few days hence.

The Colorado is the lifeblood of the ranch operation. It irrigates hundreds of acres of pasture for the cattle early in the spring, pasture that can be

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Above:
After breakfast, the Ritschard children, left to right, Julie, Lindee, Mike and Kristie, will be off to school; father, Gene, center, will open irrigation ditches, adjust a water gate 12 miles away, and move cattle between meadows. Gene's wife, Mimi, standing, will show model homes, teach a 4-H class in sewing and discuss outfit design with cheerleaders.
Below:
Also after breakfast, Con Ritschard, Gene's father will walk an ailing cow in the corral then help with the ditches and moving cattle. His wife, Gladys, will drive 40 miles to play bridge.

harvested later as hay to be fed to the same cattle all winter. Beyond that, it provides extra income for the Ritschards, who lease five cabins along its banks to a group of Denver fishermen.

"Our river has been our mainstay," Gene said. Income from the cabins pays the taxes and "takes up other little slack," he said.

The Ritschards keep 400 cows on about 8,350 acres, counting the 7,000 acres they lease for grazing from State and Federal Governments. They don't grow grain and they don't grain-feed cattle on their land. They send their young cattle to a feedlot to be fed grain and then to be sold when their weights are right. The Ritschards hope the market prices will be just right at the same time the beef cattle are at their best weight of 1,000 to 1,100 pounds. Even when the prices aren't high enough, however, the steers are sold. They can't be "stored" indefinitely like grain, waiting for better prices.

Farmers such as the Schuttes of Missouri and ranchers such as the Ritschards are called cow-calf operators. They keep a herd of cows year after year. Those cows bear calves every year, and this "crop" of animals is sold regularly.

On such farms and ranches, mothers and calves usually stay together 6 to 8 months. After that, the calves, which are soon called heifers (if they are female) or steers (if they are castrated males), are usually shipped off someplace else. They will probably be "grown out," or "stockered," on grass for 4 to 6 months (until they weigh 600 to 700 pounds) and are then sent to a feedlot to be fed fattening grain for several more months. When they are heavy enough (about 1,000 to 1,100 pounds), they are sent to a packing plant, where they are butchered and their carcasses converted into

steaks, roasts, and other beef foods. From birth of the calf to the consumer's table takes from 16 to 20 months or longer.

Somewhere near two out of three cattle slaughtered in the United States go through a feedlot of some sort, sometimes on the farm where they were born. The figure fluctuates from year to year with the cost of feeding them, which usually means the cost of corn and grain sorghum. If the cost of such feedgrains is too high, the steers are fattened on the grass instead. But that takes longer and usually results in a lower grade of beef sold at a lower price.

The cost of producing feeder calves varies widely. Including land values, it cost farmers in the Corn Belt with a 50-cow herd $369 to raise a calf in 1975. Such costs were down to $225 in the intermountain area and up to $444 in Texas—just to get a calf ready to sell to a stocker or a feedlot operator.

So cow-calf operators needed from $225 to $444 to cover the expenses of growing each calf. But such calves sold for only $80 to $150 apiece that year.

How can cow-calf operators stay in business with such losses?

A lot of them don't. But for those who remain in business, there are several answers. One is that a lot of them are going farther and farther into debt.

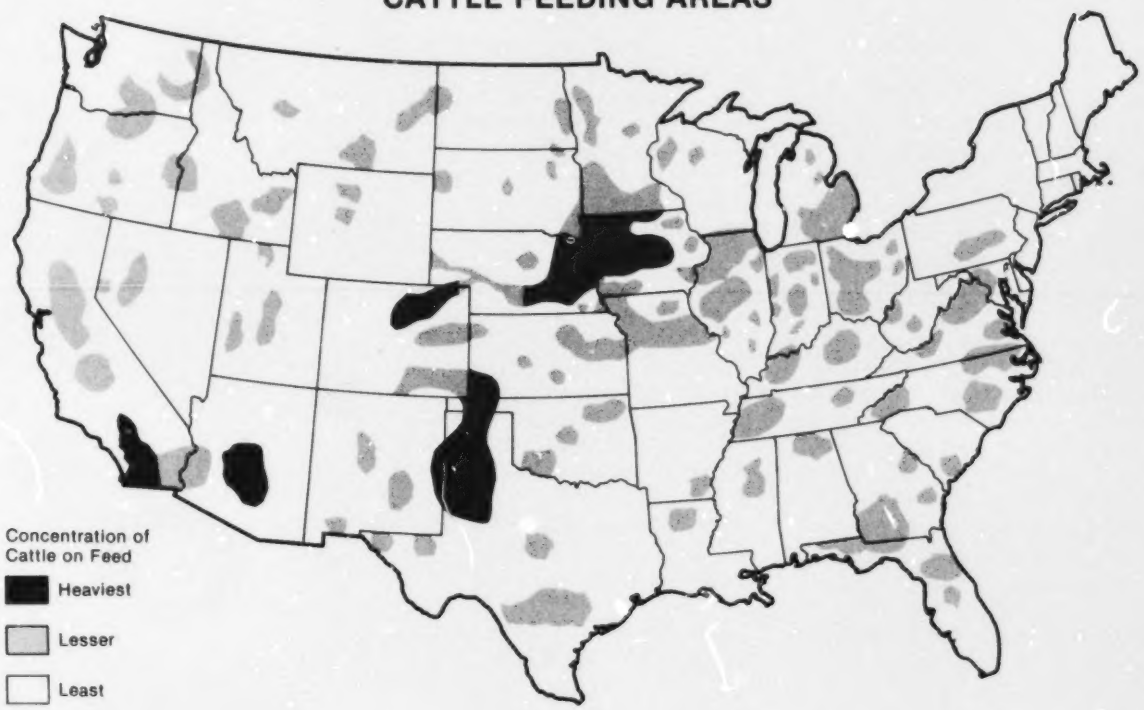
A second answer is that farmers and ranchers can scrape by in the short run—hoping for better years—by not counting as costs their management and labor or the value of their cows, machinery, and land. This kind of bookkeeping, of course, will catch up with them eventually so that when a good year or two comes by, the farmers or ranchers will make up for the lean years by buying equipment out of cash. Maybe they'll even reward their management efforts with a new car or pickup.

And, of course, figuring land values into the cost of raising beef has a far different meaning for the new landowner than for the operator who has owned his land for many years. For the person who is still paying for his land, that cost is real cash flow—right out of his hands, so to speak. For the other, it is a bookkeeping entry, but nonetheless it represents money to which he is entitled for providing the land (theoretically, that's what the buyer of the beef would have to pay for land if he decided to raise his own calves).

In 1977, net farm income on the Ritschard Ranch was $2,174—after selling cattle for $79,402 and receiving $22,495 in other income. That's over and above the wages which were paid the Ritschards from the family corporation (which legally owns the operation), some $27,000

Before school, Kristie takes water to a cow which was partially paralyzed in giving birth to a calf. Her grandfather, Con, will help the cow to her feet and then encourage her to walk so as to speed the animal's recovery. All the children have daily chores to complete, ranging from the feeding of horses to gardening, housework, and moving cattle.

CATTLE FEEDING AREAS



divided among Con, his son Gene, a full-time hired hand, and one part-time employee.

Besides Con, Gladys, Gene, and Mimi, stockholders in the ranch's family corporation are Gene's sister and her husband—Joe and Kay Kayser of Toponas, Colorado, 40 miles from Kremmling.

There have been better years for the Ritschards. In 1973, the sale of cattle alone brought the Ritschards $148,000, which was $13,000 over expenses.

By shrewd management over the years, the Ritschards have put away enough savings to reduce their borrowings each year. In 1976, they paid only $500 in interest and in 1977, none.

Many ranchers on the western slope pay as much as $1,200 interest a year, according to Henry Gronewaller of the Extension Service at Colorado State University. Dr. Gronewaller is a management specialist who helps a great many ranchers in the area through a computerized business analysis program.

"These folks on the western slope are borrowing $150,000 a year to meet operating and living expenses," he said. "In 1975, they lost $100 a head. In 1976, they lost $100 a head. The only thing that keeps them in business is land inflation," or the inflated value of land that enables the rancher to offer more collateral for loans.

Mimi Ritschard says that "financially, ranching is getting tougher all the time. Our son will have to have some other source of income."

Her son Mike has always been deeply involved in the work on their ranch. He's been riding a horse since he was of kindergarten age. His horse, the same age as Mike, is Partner, half Thoroughbred and half quarter horse.

"That's the kind of horse we like," his grandfather Con said, nodding toward Partner. "When a calf stops, he stops. He has hotter blood and more stamina than a full Thoroughbred or a full quarter horse. But he'll buck you off in the morning once in a while."

After school, Mike and Partner helped Con and Gene move some cows and their calves to another pasture down beside the Colorado. Together they saddled up next to the corral and rode, casually straight-backed, through the viaduct under U.S. 40 to the Colorado River. As their horses crossed the bridge that Con had built years ago, the river seemed lower than usual to Con. The weather had been dry.

Cows and calves foraged leisurely in the big meadow on the other side. The men rode slowly up to the herd, trying to decide which calves belonged with which cows before they

THE MISSING $2.00

"Farm-retail price spreads" may sound like gobbledygook to you, but they do exist and your grocery bill reflects them.

For example, if you bought a T-bone steak at $2.50 a pound, a large part of what you paid falls between the farmer and your shopping bag. The farmer received only about 50 cents a pound for that steer your T-bone came from.

Why the gap? That's where farm-retail price spreads come into the picture. There are a lot of costs involved in transforming the animal on the hoof into steaks and other cuts in your supermarket.

Your T-bone starts out as part of a live animal—usually about a 1,000-pound steer. When the farmer sells the steer, let's say he gets 50 cents a pound or $500.

Then the animal goes to the packer and is dressed out to a 620-pound carcass. Not including any value added by the packer's services, the carcass is now worth 80.6 cents a pound.

The carcass must be cut and packaged for retailing, however. By the time some bone and fat are removed and some moisture and meat are lost during the process, only about 440 pounds of salable meat are left. This meat now has a value of about $1.14 cents a pound.

Processing, transportation, and marketing costs also have to be figured. Add to that $1.14 cents per pound about 10 cents for slaughtering, 4 cents for transportation from slaughterhouse to retail store, another 23 cents for labor to cut the carcass into retail cuts and package it for sale, about 5 cents for packaging material, and about 2 cents for advertising.

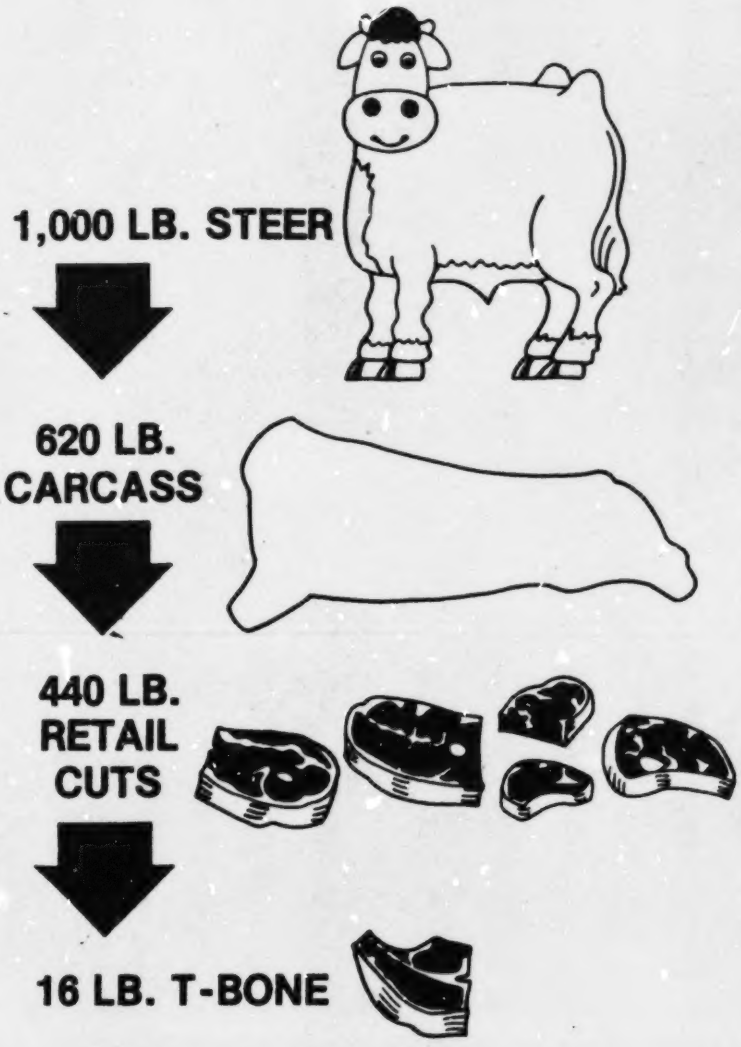
Add on a little profit for each of the firms along the line, and you come up with a figure of about $1.60 a pound for the 440 pounds of usable meat.

But how did that T-bone get up to $2.50 a pound?

Well, that steer we started with produced a mere 16 pounds of T-bone steak in the first place. The other 424 pounds of meat were mostly cuts that sell at lower prices than T-bone. Chuck steaks and roasts, ground beef, shanks, short ribs, and stew meat are good examples.

If you average out all the hamburger at, let's say, $1.00 a pound, the T-bone at $2.50 a pound, and all other cuts at various prices, you come out with $1.60 per pound.

That's why the price the farmer receives per pound of live animal is so far from the price the consumer pays for meat in the supermarket. But then again, the conveniently packaged, ready-to-cook cuts of meat you buy in the supermarket are a far cry from the 1,000-pound live animal.



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Three generations move cattle at the Ritschard Ranch: Mike and his dad, Gene, left, and Gene's dad, Con, bottom photo. Most Ritschard cattle are a cross between red and white Herefords and black Angus though there are some purebreds of each kind. A calf's color doesn't always match the mother because father's color may differ. This increases difficulty in pairing calves with mothers, as Gene is doing, below.

separated 25 pairs to be driven to another pasture.

Riding among the animals, Con stood in the stirrups, moving as smoothly as a water bug on the Colorado River. He darted swiftly among the animals, identifying cows and calves that belonged together and separating each pair from the herd. The cowboy's legs absorbed the horse's movements like tireless steel springs.

Mike rode into the herd and followed a calf around until it panicked and bolted for open grass. His mother bolted with him. They were a pair. Mike pointed them toward the gate.

Gene paused to count the number of cattle that had been started toward the gate at the head of the meadow. There were enough. The men rode to the gate and opened it. The cows and calves pushed through to a hillside covered with sagebrush.

After walking a few hundred yards through sagebrush, the cows and calves came to a wooden bridge. They refused to cross. Gene roped a calf, dismounted, and wrestled the calf, bawling and struggling, across the bridge. Its concerned mother followed. Then all the others.

Two gates, more sagebrush and another bridge crossing later, the cows and calves arrived at their new temporary pasture. In a few months, they would be moved again. Then again. Meantime, they would be eating grass and converting it through their ruminant stomachs into beef such as man has been eating since antiquity.

It was spring—the busiest time of year on the ranch.

"Everything happens at once," Gene said.

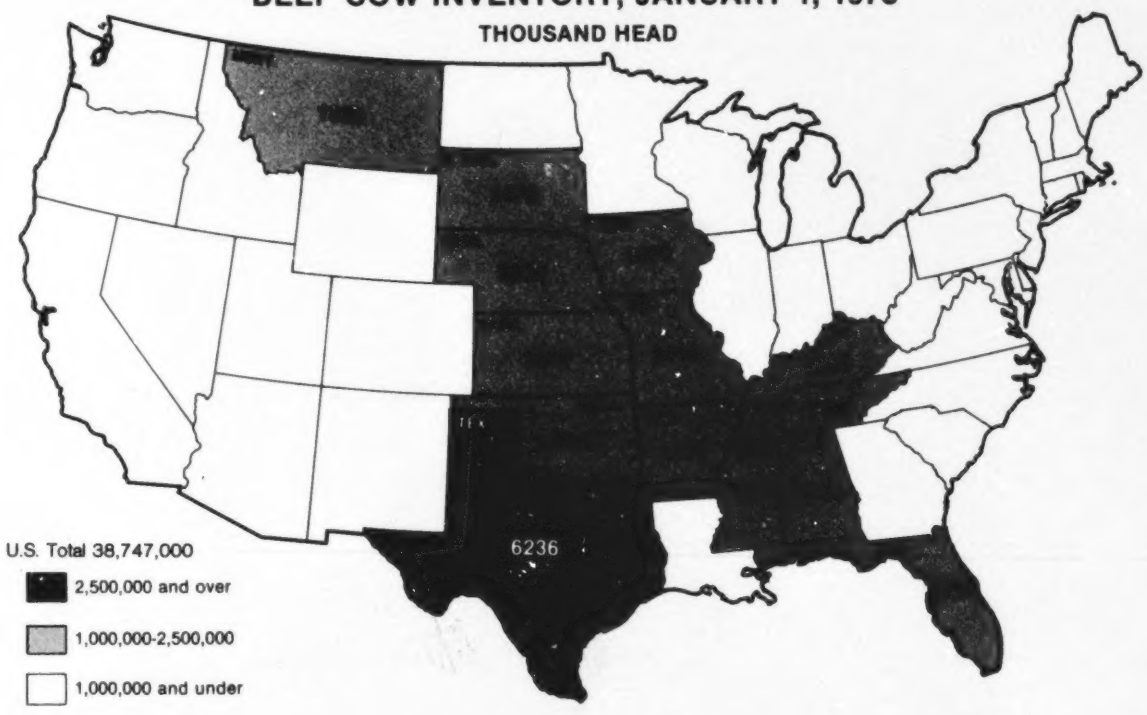
The cows begin calving in early April. Early in May 1977, the Ritschards had branded 350 calves.

Gene and his dad, a hired hand, Mike, Mike's friend, a cousin, Gene's brother-in-law, and five other young men did the work. It took only 4 hours.

It's really more than branding. Three pairs of men wrestled the calves off their feet, another man castrated the male calves, two men branded the calves, one man vaccinated them against blackleg disease, and Con dehorned the animals. He also notched their ears so they could be easily identified out on the range. Then the calves are released to join their mothers.

Male calves are castrated to improve their behavior, their rate of weight gain, and the flavor of their beef.

Branding time provides quite a show and the Ritschards can expect 25 to 35 people to show up for it, either to work or just to watch. So Mimi and her mother-in-law prepare and serve a feast. In the spring of 1977, they served a rolled beef roast, a



ham, a mess of beans, a lot of coleslaw, three salads, a bunch of homemade rolls, and some homemade cinnamon rolls.

Another spring job at the Ritschard ranch is cleaning out the grassy ditches that deliver water to the meadows and pastures, not only at the lower ranch along the Colorado but also at the upper ranch 12 miles north.

The flow of water to the meadows is controlled by gates operated by the Ritschards. The Colorado is the source of water at the lower ranch and the Troublesome Creek is the source at the upper ranch.

Without water to spread across the meadows, ranching, as the Ritschards do it, would be impossible. Melting snow provides the water. Cattlemen can tell how much water will be available in the spring and summer for their grazing cattle when Soil Conservation Service specialists measure the depth of the snow pack on the mountains in the winter. Ranchers like to see the snow pack melt gradually through the summer, keeping the streams, rivers, and meadows replenished without flooding.

Since one stream's water may be shared by several ranches, the amount of water that each receives is important, especially in dry years. Most water arguments, though, were settled decades ago. The first rancher to start using a creek's water assumed first rights to the water, which are called senior water rights in the West. Ranchers who came along later assumed their secondary rights in the order in which their ranches were established. Water rights are sold with the land.

One legend claims that Troublesome Creek was named after an argument over water rights that took the life of one rancher.

The Ritschards hold senior water rights on the Colorado and junior water rights on Troublesome Creek.

On the day that the Ritschards were moving cattle between pastures, a neighbor with senior water rights on Troublesome telephoned Gene to say he needed more water. Without hesitation, Gene drove 12 miles to the upper ranch in a pickup and adjusted a water gate so that more of the Troublesome flowed to the neighboring ranch. It was a precision adjustment based on a series of numerical tables in an engineers' handbook that Gene carries.

With our national concern for water, it irritates the Ritschards on their occasional visits to cities to find so many city residents sprinkling their lawns. They think the Nation will someday have to decide between food and green lawns in western cities.

In the spring, manure is spread on the meadows, fences are fixed, and, finally, all of the cows and calves are walked 12 miles to spring pasture at the upper ranch.

It takes four or five men one day to drive the herd up the winding gravel road to the upper ranch. About 70 young cows (first-time mothers) are trucked up with their calves earlier.

The upper ranch is at an elevation of 8,000 feet above sea level—the lower, at 7,500 feet.

The herd is kept at the 720-acre upper ranch only a week or so, and then driven up into the high country—up to 10,000 feet above sea level—where they graze until fall on land leased from the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), the Forest Service, and the State of Colorado.

Rangeland varies widely in its ability to feed livestock. It is leased in terms of how many animal units per month (AUM's) it can support. A grazing permit stated in terms of 300 head for 4 months would be called a 300-head permit. Whole ranches are sold in terms of cow units, say, at a price of $1,200 per cow unit.

"We don't talk in terms of acres around here," Gene says. "Some don't even know how many they have. Ranches are sold on carrying capacity."

After their cows and calves begin grazing on the public land in the summer, the Ritschards drive to the high land once or twice a week to ride among the animals and check for sick cows and lame bulls. They also move the animals into fenced-in pastures to assure an even consumption of forage and to prevent overgrazing.

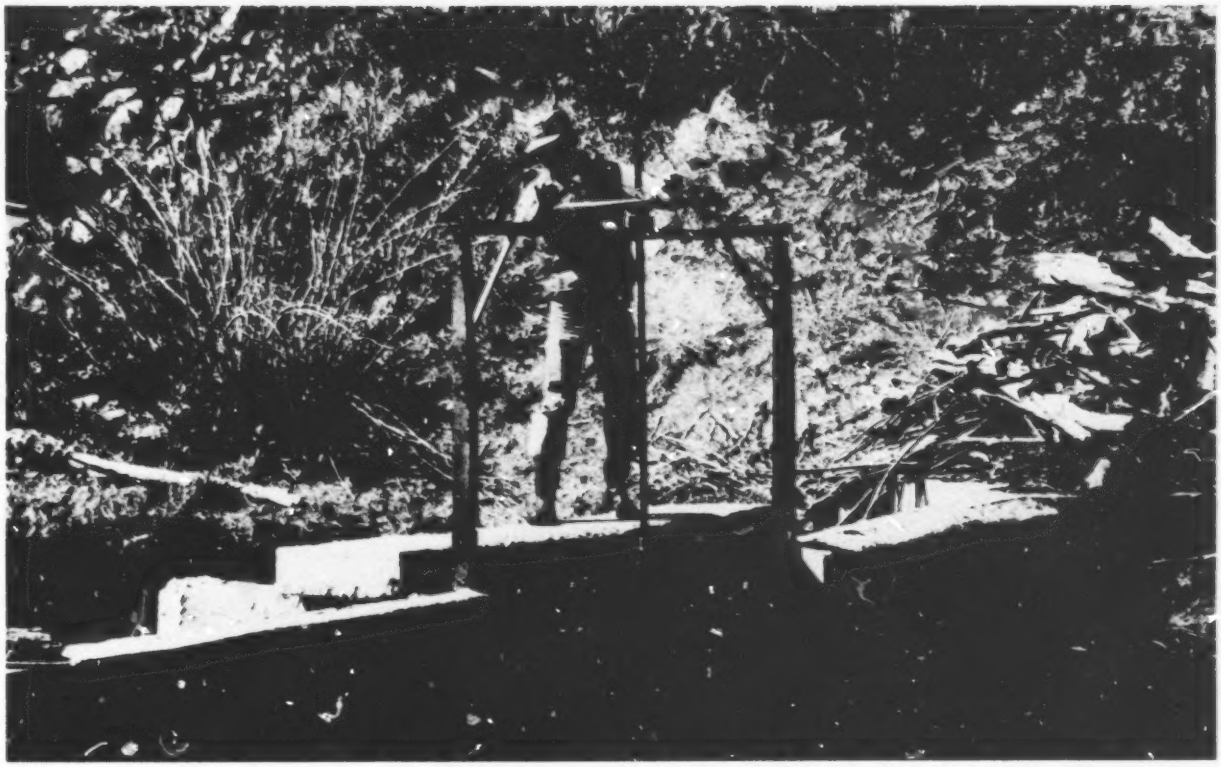
The Ritschards and other smart ranchers move the cattle from grazing area to grazing area so that all the leased land is used by the time the cattle are moved off early in the winter. Such management of rangeland is necessary not only to keep the animals well fed but to assure that the range is not overgrazed, that is, eaten down to the point where the grass is killed or will grow less over the years.

The bulls are trucked up to the highlands about June 25. Con and Gene place the bulls among the cows, trying to arrange them in such a way genetically that the offspring will be quick weight gainers.

The Ritschards buy purebred bulls whose families are known for rapid rate of gain. In 1976, they even went so far as to buy four prize-winning bulls exhibited at the National Western stock show in Denver—they were the second best pen of four animals in the show. As if that were an extravagance, Con explained,

"The market was at a lull, and we could afford them."

Altogether, the Ritschards lease 2,500 acres of BLM land, an equal amount of land from the State, and another 2,000 acres from the Forest Service.



Water is vital to Ritschard cattle operation. At top, Gene adjusts board level of diversion ditch off Troublesome Creek so neighbor with senior water rights will get greater water flow. At right, he adjusts flow of Troublesome water in a meadow at the upper ranch. That's his parents' first home in background. Above, he cleans out ditch to ease flow of Colorado River water across meadow at lower ranch.

All of this land is leased for about 700 animals.

Such leases are tied to deeded holdings—whoever secures one has to own some land first.

A good bull is kept on a ranch or farm about 3 years and then sold. The reason is that after that, there's a good chance he would mate with one of his own female offspring and any weaknesses in the family genetics would become more pronounced in the offspring.

Cows are kept 7 to 9 years, the good ones for as long as 12 years. Then they are sold for beef, and are replaced in the herd by the most promising of the heifers (female "teenagers") born in the spring 2 years earlier. How many of these females are kept is a reflection of (1) the amount of forage available on the ranch or farm, and (2) the owner's optimism about the prices he can get in the future for the offspring of the new cows. Nationally, 15 to 20 percent of all beef cows are replaced annually.

In 1977, the Ritschards kept 60 calves to become replacement cows. They usually keep 70.

Beyond managing the cattle, the Ritschards' biggest activity in the summer is the harvesting of about 900 tons of hay in August. The hay is harvested and stored to feed the cattle through the harsh winters. The amount of hay raised or bought largely determines the size of the herd that may be kept. The more hay needed to be bought, the less net income there may be left after the sale of the cattle. So ranchers raise as much hay as they can.

If there is a drought, there won't be enough water to soak the meadows and there won't be enough hay. So a rancher might be forced to sell some cows along with the calves.

For the consumer, this could mean more beef at the stores in the short run and less beef at the stores in the long run, inasmuch as there will be fewer cows to calve the following year.

The Ritschards cut, bale, and haul the hay from 500 acres of grassland each August—all with the help of labor-saving machinery, of course.

After haying, activity eases up a little on the ranch. Gene calls it "the best time of the whole year." He might go camping and hunting in the mountains with his family. From mid-September to the first of November, the Ritschards mend fences, put fences around the hay, which is all stored outdoors, and make other ranch improvements.

Then they bring the cattle down from the high country to the ranches. Heifers which have borne their first calves and these calves are kept at the upper ranch; the rest are driven down to the 630-acre lower ranch.

There cows are tested for pregnancy and treated for grubs (heel fly larvae that burrow into the heel of the animal).

The Ritschards also start weaning the calves—taking them off their mothers' milk.

In January, the cows are reunited at the upper ranch. In March, the hay runs out at the upper ranch and the cows are all driven down to the lower ranch.

From the time the steers are weaned, they are eligible for sale. The exact time of their sale depends on prices.

If the price of corn is low, the Ritschards will ship the steers in the fall to a feedlot, probably in northeast Colorado, where they will pay the feedlot owner 40 cents for each pound that the steer gains plus expenses for medicine or anything else.

On steers sent into a feedlot, they have made a profit of $40 to $50 a head over and above what one calf would have brought if it were sold immediately after weaning. On the other hand, the Ritschards have been known to lose $80 a head sending them through a feedlot.

There's another alternative: a rancher can sell the weaned steers immediately to someone who will feed them and assume the risks of the market. Con says they have sold cattle every way possible. They have grain fed the steers on their own ranch, but that got too expensive. Con says. They lost $75 to $100 a head on such cattle, he says.

"We don't have a pattern," Con explains. "We watch the market. If cattle prices are high and we can make a profit, we sell 'em. Some people get too greedy. But if we're getting a fair profit, we market a percentage."

If the price isn't right at the time the calves are weaned, the Ritschards keep them, if they have enough hay. The calves are fed hay and protein supplement "until the market turns."

The Ritschards have been known to sell their calves to what Con described as farm feeders in Iowa, and to feeders as far east as Pennsylvania.

"We sell over the telephone," he says. "They know our cattle."

And if farm feeders aren't bidding high enough for the Ritschard feeder cattle, the Ritschards test the prices in auction rings in Denver, Fort Collins, or Brush, Colorado. There are feeder auctions every week.

The Ritschards assign the feeder cattle to an auction and take whatever price they bring. Truckers charge the Ritschards 75 cents a hundred pounds to deliver cattle to Brush; the charge is somewhat less to Denver. "We can't afford to bring them back home," Gene said.

"We can't price our commodity," Con points out. "We sell for whatever we can get. On the other hand, when we buy something, we still pay what they say."

Con says "you guys put us in

some awful corners sometimes. We have to readjust the operation all the time."

"Cut corners and find new sources of income"—that's what the Ritschards would print on bumper stickers.

Besides renting cabins on the Colorado, the Ritschards feed and otherwise care for horses from nearby dude ranches during the winter. This helps them use up their surplus hay.

"We're not making a profit—we're not even getting paid for our work," Con says. "We utilize everything."

It's been that way from the beginning. When Con married Gladys, all they possessed was a team of horses.

For 7 years they lived in a rented log cabin and saved money from what Con earned as a ranch hand.

By 1939, Con and Gladys had saved $2,000. So they borrowed $2,000 from a neighboring bachelor, who didn't require any security; added a $1,000 loan from Con's sister, and made a down payment on a ranch owned by the county assessor. The asking price for what became the Ritschards' lower ranch was $17,500.

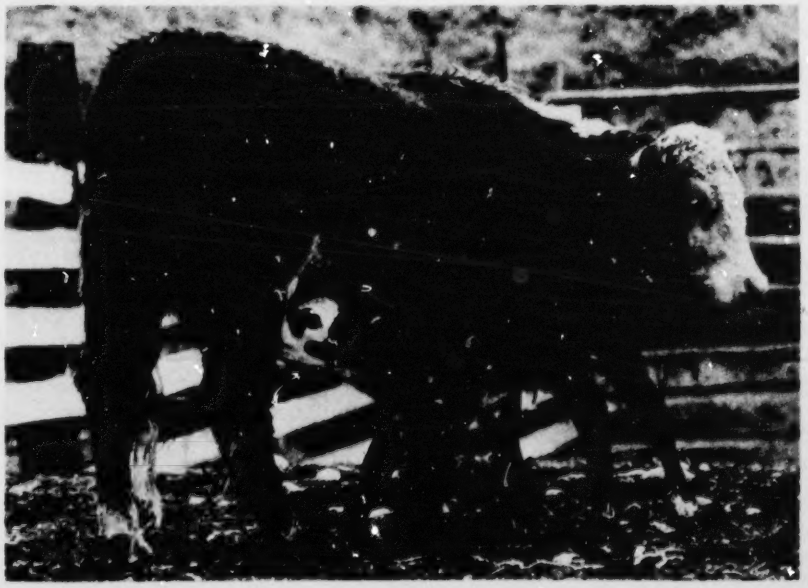
Con and Gladys had by this time acquired 20 head of cattle, free of debt, so they mortgaged these cattle and bought 20 more head of cattle. With that start, they built a family corporation that now includes two ranches.

Looking back, Con says he'd like to do it all over again.

"I wouldn't," says Gladys.

Over the years, there have been a lot of laughs and a lot of close calls. At the county dances, playful cowboys would switch the blankets on sleeping children so that their parents, numb from dancing, would take the wrong youngsters home with them.

Once Gladys was asked to handle the driving of a pickup truck that was being pulled out of the icy Colorado.



A cow and her calf together form one unit for purposes of leasing land for grazing. Also, when Westerners talk about the size of a ranch, they speak in terms of cow-calf units rather than acres. The reason is that the quality of the grass varies so widely. Ranchers and government experts know about how many cow-calf units an area can support without overgrazing, assuming an average amount of rainfall and irrigation water. If too many animals graze an area, less grass will grow back the following year—perhaps none at all.

Teams of horses would run away at least once a day. Tractors turned over.

Con says that he has been fortunate. "The Old Man has been sittin' on my shoulder a long time," he says. He recalls one time when he was "riding a bronc and heading a big old southern cow, when she came back in front of my horse and the horse reared up and fell." Con's boot was caught in the stirrup. But Con's boot came loose—just before the horse rolled over three times.

Yet, when someone suggested that ranchers are "pretty much stove up by 55," Gladys disagreed. She said Con's brother is 69 and still doing pretty much what he did before.

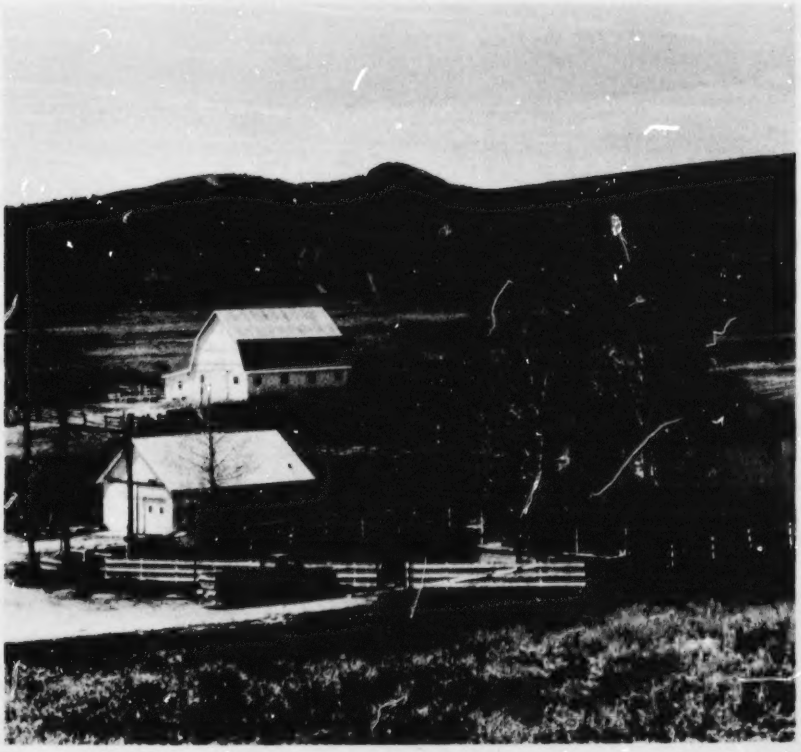
Ranch life in the "old days" could be lonely.

Folks didn't see each other during the winter. In the spring when they met in town, they'd inquire, "how'd you winter?"

In about February, the lack of visitors would get to Gladys, who now plays bridge three times a week when weather permits. As she grew crankier, Con would finally utter the code words "why don't you go to town and get the mail?" And Gladys would go.

"She was a truck driver and everything," Con recalls. For years, they rented cabins, so Gladys washed 50 sheets a week. They milked cows and sold milk in town, so Gladys was constantly washing milk bottles. They had a mail route, so for 16 years Gladys delivered mail over a 50-mile route twice a week. She even worked with the cattle—until she was thrown off a horse.

"When we were married," Con chuckles, "we agreed that she would take care of the little things and I'd take care of the big things. Well, nothing big came along."



Left:
Upper ranch of Ritschards is summer home for Gene, Mimi and family. It is also a stop-over place for cattle on the way to and from grazing on the high ground. Land in background is leased for grazing from Bureau of Land Management.
Below:
Signs on utility pole beside U.S. 40 indicate some of family's activities.

Con and Gladys enjoy keeping close track of the busy lives of their grandchildren.

All winter, the youngsters ride 8½ miles each way in a school bus to attend classes in Kremmling. In the spring and fall, though, when the whole family is living at the upper ranch, they ride 30 miles round trip on a school bus to the same school.

To show what this distance can do, Mimi recalls a recurring incident when she was school nurse. She'd discover a child was ill and telephone its mother only to discover that the mother had no idea of the illness because it was so dark when the child got on the bus.

All the Ritschard children show cattle at the Middle Fair and Rodeo held in September. Mike has won the rate-of-gain contest, and once exhibited a reserve champion.

Sure, the steers become pets while the youngsters are feeding them through the year. And yes, the kids will cry when they are sold. Gene remembers the year that Julie named her steer Baby.

"That really tore everybody up, when Julie sold her Baby," he recalls.

Mimi says she is jealous of her kids who get to do "so many neat things," such as Mike going to Fort Collins for 3 days to study judging and cartooning under the auspices of 4-H, a nationwide youth program coordinated by the Cooperative Extension Service.

Of course, Mimi is responsible for some of those "neat things" —swimming lessons in the summer and skiing lessons in the winter. Her children are quick learners. In an effort to get ahead of them once, Mimi took skiing lessons by herself for two seasons before getting the children started. They caught up with her in their first few lessons.

The family has taken trips together to California, the Grand Canyon, New Mexico, and Texas. One Friday before Labor Day, they drove into Denver against a flood of outgoing traffic, rented rooms in a motel, and had the motel's swimming pool practically to themselves for the weekend.

Mimi says, "our main function is our kids." And that interest extends beyond the family. She is not only a leader in 4-H but teaches sewing in 4-H and is superintendent of her church's Sunday school. Gene is president of the school board and a member of the Colorado Cattleman's Association.

Mimi is secretary-treasurer of her church and a county political committee, belongs to a sorority which raises money for civic projects, is a member of the Cow Belles (a women's organization within the Colorado Cattleman's Association), and sells modular homes. The latter

job helps pay for the orthodontic work on the children.

Con recalls that a group of Kansas cattle families visited their ranch in 1976 and said that all their wives worked in town.

There have always been good years and bad years in the cattle business. In 1976, most ranchers lost money, if you figure every cost of doing business—as most regular businesses would. On the other hand, 1973 was a pretty good year.

"If the drought continues (in 1977), some will go under," Con says, "The stout will survive.

"You couldn't hire someone to run this ranch and then have any money left for yourself. We're not making a profit. We're not even getting paid for our work.

"The government seems to think people will stay out here and work for nothing."

Con believes the captains of industry come from a rural background, where "they were taught how to work and how to do for themselves.

"Out here you have to be an electrician, a welder, a lawyer, a ditch shoveler, a financier. And you have to be able to argue your own case."

Con has gone before governing bodies to petition that the activities of boaters on the Colorado be restricted.

"They were filling up the river," he said, "and leaving dirty campgrounds." There was vandalism.

What with land values in the area rising in recent years, Gene concedes that their ranch land is worth about a million dollars, though it would be difficult if not impossible to pay that much for it and then get your money back in the foreseeable future.

The Ritschards would probably never sell, anyway.

Sure, it gets cold in the winter and Gene says he doesn't like looking out the window to read "32 degrees below zero" on the thermometer.

"But after you've been out in it awhile, it isn't so bad," he says philosophically. And he can look forward to spring—turning the cattle out to grass—and the calving.

THE RITSCHARD RANCH, 1977

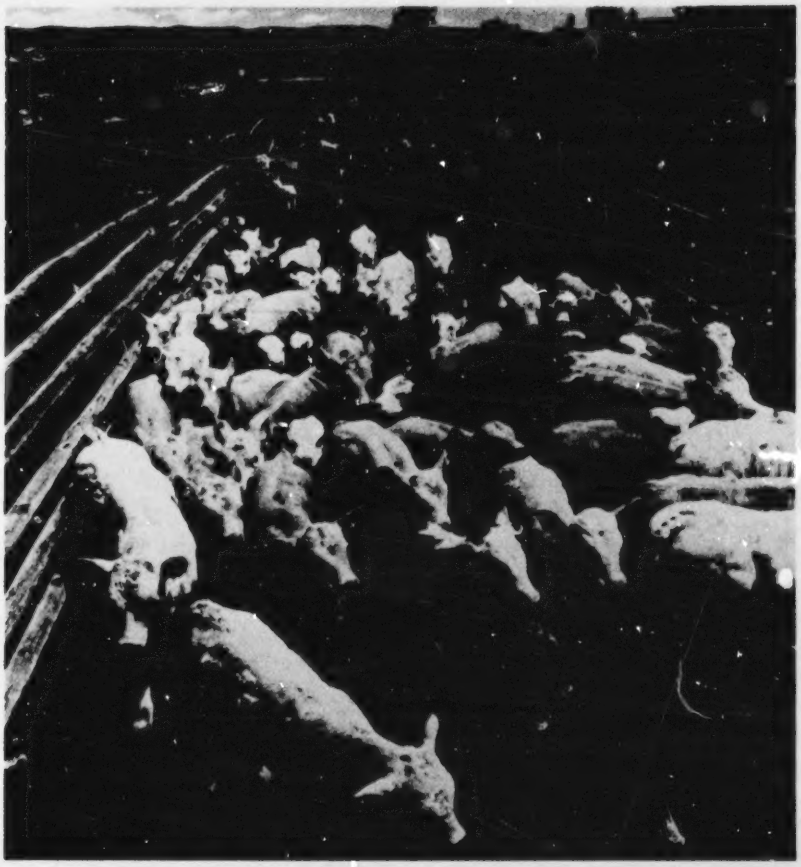
Debits	
Veterinary and breeding fees	$ 1,784
Sale, purchase, and trucking of animals	75
Other livestock expenses	100
Machinery repair, supplies	4,599
Fuel and oil	4,300
Farm share of auto	113
Farm share of utilities	2,264
Irrigation costs	6,338
Fertilizer	4,488
Seeds, supplies, etc.	1,127
Operational labor	27,054
Miscellaneous	3,657
Taxes	6,037
Insurance	3,960
Building improvement, repairs	4,566
Feed purchases	9,223
Livestock purchases	17,105
Total cash expenses	$101,339
Machinery, equipment depreciation	$ 6,633
Building, improvement depreciation	5,419
Beginning inventory	208,358
Total business debts	$321,749
Credits	
Sale of livestock and livestock products	$ 79,402
Sale of feed crops	9,744
Gas tax refund	238
Government payments	181
Cooperative's dividends	228
Miscellaneous	12,104
Total cash receipts	$101,897
Ending inventory	$222,026
Total business credits	$323,923

Net farm income: $2,174, which represents what the Ritschards paid themselves for their management.

Also of interest in Ritschard operation:	
Net return per $100 capital investment	$ .43
Economic cost of maintaining an animal 1 year	$442.35
Total cash income per animal	$313.53
Net loss per animal	$128.82

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

CALVES GET 'BRAND NAMES'

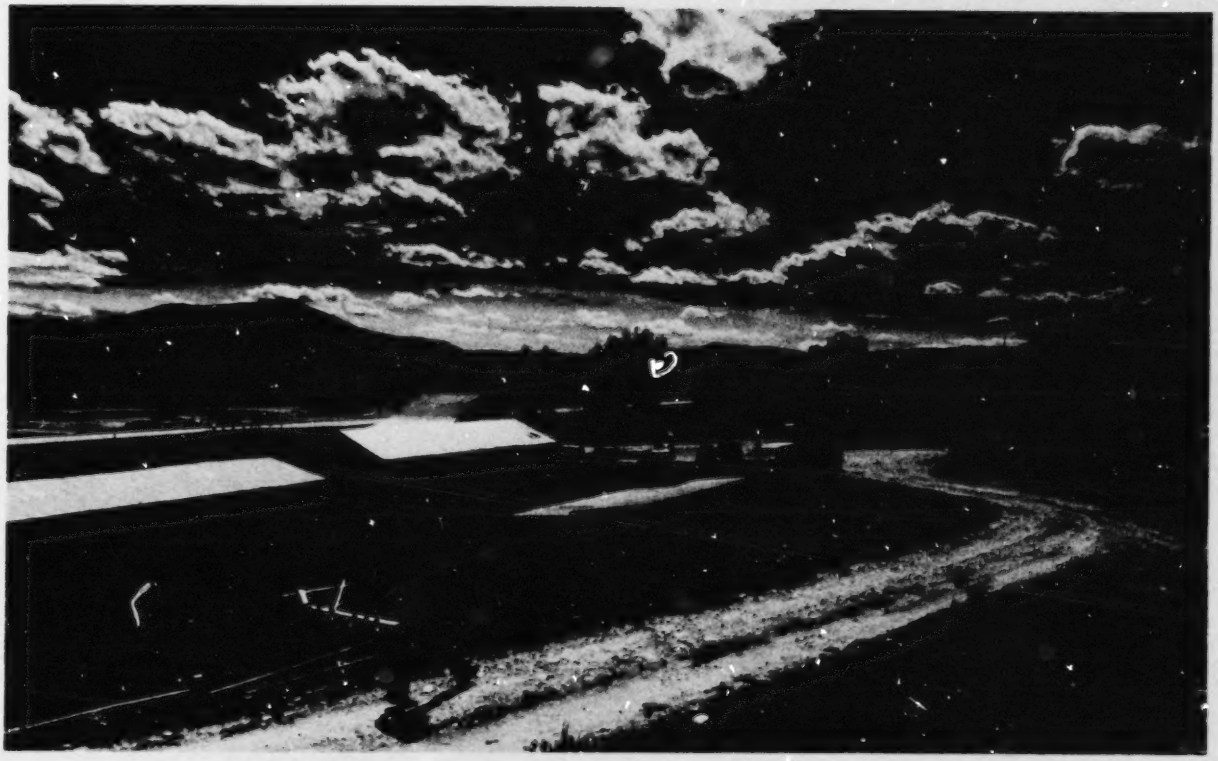


Left:
Separating calves from their mothers is important early step in branding operation. Calves are in foreground.
Bottom:
Wagon of hay in foreground lured cattle to corral. Riders encourage the movement. As cattle ebb and flow within corral, cattlemen use gates and corrals-within-a-corral to separate calves from cows.
Below:
After herding calves on foot with a feed sack, Fred Kayser, a nephew of Gene and Mimi, finds time to relax.

Above:
Modern cattlemen like Joe Kayser, Con Ritschard's son-in-law and a stockholder in the ranching operation, brand with old-fashioned heated irons while jets emblazon sky with contrails.
Right:
Young people pitted their muscles and stamina against bovine fear and strength for 3 hours in the spring of 1978 to see that 325 calves were inoculated against disease and branded. The males are also castrated (becoming steers) and one ear on each female is notched with a knife to make her easier to identify on the range when she gets older. The Ritschards branded another 50 calves earlier.

19

Everyone plays an important role at a branding. While Joe Kayser ropes calves, his niece Kristie tends an animal which seems ill. Joe's daughter Jody inoculated for awhile, then switched to holding rear legs of calves steady for branding. Afterward, in Gene and Mimi's kitchen, Jody joins other helpers and guests at huge dinner. Before mid-afternoon, it's all over and time to get on with other ranch work.



Herbert Schutte, right, is the only one of 10 children of Mr. and Mrs. Lawrence H. Schutte to continue living on a farm. His father, left, who lives next to him, says he laughs when the other children "come out here and try to boss me." Lawrence and his five sons used to milk 20 cows twice a day by hand. Now there are no dairy cows left on either farm.

Growing Grain and Raising Cattle Near the Mississippi

A thousand miles east of the Ritschards and not far north of the midwestern segment of the same U.S. 40 which runs in front of the Ritschard ranch homes, another river—the mighty Mississippi—serves another cattle family.

The Herbert Schutte family of Kahoka, Missouri, raises and feeds beef cattle. But it also depends on the sale of soybeans from its farm to make a living. For the Schuttes, the Mississippi River is a huge conduit by which their soybeans and sometimes corn reach the markets of the world.

Thousands of barges shuttle up and down the Mississippi River to help carry away the bountiful grain harvests of middle America. They travel only 9 miles east of the Schutte farm.

Herbert Schutte sells his beans to the local elevator operator, the Logsdon Brothers, which in turn sells them to others along the marketing chain.

When to sell soybeans is a key decision for Herbert. He tunes in to local radio stations several times daily for reports on bean and cattle prices both locally and in Chicago. Even while he is bouncing through a pasture in a pickup, the radio may tell him the price of beans is just right and it is time to sell. In that case he would drive immediately to his ranch home, telephone the elevator operator, confirm what he's paying that day for beans, and then sell, say, 300 or 3,000 bushels of beans over the phone.

When he contracts to sell, Herbert then telephones a trucker to arrange for the pickup and delivery of his beans. Selling 300 bushels of beans at $6 a bushel, Herbert would soon get a check in the mail for $1,800. Or he could drive over to the Mississippi and pick up the check personally as early as the day the beans are delivered.

Herbert, like others in the 30 States where soybeans are grown, keeps soybeans on the farm like cash in the bank. He may store some of them on his dad's farm, which is next to his.

Soybeans are the best money crop there is, according to his dad, Lawrence H. Schutte.

Soybeans, Herbert says, are the only thing he sells that have doubled in price, though his fuel and fertilizer bills have both doubled since 1972.

In February 1977, Herbert had 3,300 bushels of soybeans stored on his farm. He'd harvested 3,000 bushels the previous fall to add to 300 already in storage . . . waiting for the prices to get high enough to coax the beans

out of their bins.

Herbert was born on the adjoining farm where his mother and father continue to live. One of 10 children, he's the only one who stayed in farming. And he loves it.

Once he tried another way of life. After 3 years in the army, he married Carmie, who lived nearby, and went to work for a big biscuit company in Quincy, Ill., about 50 miles south of his parents' farm. That was in 1953.

"But, I never saw daylight," he says. "I lasted less than a year."

Herbert and Carmie soon bought some wooded land next to his father's farm and started to clear away the underbrush and trees. They lived in an old old house—"with holes in it so big you could throw a cat through them"—for 4 years, 1 year without electricity. Three weeks after they moved in, the house was nearly wrecked by a tornado that tore over the ridge.

"Carmie said many times she wondered why she ever came out here with me," Herbert recalled. "But we learned we could live that way—if we had to."

They built their present ranch home in 1958, providing most of their own labor.

The Schuttes bought 280 acres in 1954, including the homestead, for $15,000 and planted 60 acres each to soybeans and corn. Then Herbert and his father cleared another 150 acres of trees and brush for cropland, grazing land, and ponds.

On those 280 acres, Herbert and Carmie keep a herd of 50 high-grade beef cows. They also rent another 320 acres for growing corn and soybeans. They feed grain to 45 young cattle each year for sale both privately and at local auctions. In addition, they feed 100 hogs and plan to increase the number to 400.

"It was the hogs that paid for this farm," Schutte said. "We've been building up the cattle. Now we have the herd built up to where we hope it can make some money."

Herbert believes that security on the farm lies in a diversified operation. "If one thing loses, maybe another makes money," he says.

It works for him. In 1976, he was selected one of Missouri's seven top farm managers.

"With too many of the specialized units, 2 years of bad prices and they are out of business," Herbert says. "We're just out here to make a living."

About raising livestock, "When it's raining and you can't work in the fields, you can look out at your cattle and say 'they're making me money,' " Herbert says.

Unlike western Colorado, where it might take 15 to 30 acres of grazing land to provide enough feed for one animal unit (a cow and a calf), Herbert figures it takes 1 acre of his rich grassland to pasture one cow—or two cows if he were to seed one of those "high powered" fast-growing grasses.

Herbert likes to feed his cattle hay because "the more roughage they use, the more they're going to make you." However, he feeds them more corn when the price he can get for corn at the elevator isn't high enough to encourage him to sell the corn to others.

In 1977, Herbert said, "When corn sells for $3.65 a bushel, we start selling corn."

"Until they've got the money to pay for my grain, I'm going to feed it to the cattle," Herbert says. "I can't produce corn and then give it away."

When the weather's good, Herbert and his land can produce corn very well—usually 130 bushels to the acre, nearly

Lawrence Schutte, 78, joins his grandson Daniel, 16, in cultivating soybeans in late spring. Knives behind tractors cut soil between young soybean plants, killing weeds and enabling the soil to better hold moisture. Driver must see that knives don't harm soybean plants.

70 percent above the national average. In the drought year of 1976, however, 50 bushels of corn to the acre was good for a field on the Schutte farm.

The Schutte cattle are out on pasture from mid-April until the snow flies in the fall. Their diet of grass is supplemented by protein feed laced with vitamins. The animals are switched among four 20-acre pastures.

Since Herbert has built a pond of water in every 20-acre pasture by damming creeks that flow off his hilly land, each pasture is an independent feed unit. Building such ponds was his first big job after he cleared the land in the fifties.

From about 50 acres of other grassland, Herbert cuts hay two or three times a summer to store for winter feeding.

Herbert plans that calves born in the spring are weaned by the first of November. By then, last year's calves have been sold.

Weaned calves at Herbert's farm are allowed to eat all the hay they want at first, but their intake of grain is gradually increased as their hay ration is reduced.

"You can founder (cripple or stunt) them by feeding them too much grain at first," Herbert says. "Their hooves get longer and they kind of gant up (get thin). They never fatten as good."

Like the Ritschards, Herbert is continually trying to improve his calves' rate of gain.

Some calves, Herbert says, gain 3 pounds a day, others not over 2. By the time a steer or a heifer on the Schutte farm is a year old, it weighs 500 to 700 pounds.

By the time they are ready for sale, the Schutte steers are being fed 18 to 20 pounds of grain a day.

Herbert aims for a rate of gain of 2¼ pounds a day per animal.

"We have to make 2 pounds a day or we lose money," he says. "If the gain is 2 pounds a day and we sell the animal for 50 cents a pound, that means a dollar of gain a day. If the gain is 2½ pounds a day, we can sell for 40 cents and make the same amount of money—if we do it on the same amount of feed."

Part of the gaining ability of the calf is hereditary, part comes from the ration, and part from the care the animal is given—how well it is kept from stress conditions.

Herbert says it cost him $350 to raise a calf in 1976, figuring the cost of the mother, feed, and medicine—but not the value of his land. That's 35 cents a pound. If he had figured in the price of using his land, he said, he would have lost $140 a head when he sold.

He sells the animals (both steers and heifers) at what he considers their peak weight, 1,000 to 1,100 pounds. After that,

Left:
Checking on condition of his cows everyday, Herbert Schutte finds they respond readily when he drives into their pasture and calls. Daughters Ann, 9, and Barbara, 4, like to feed the tame animals broken ears of corn.
Above:
Tying barbed wire with twine only because it is a temporary fencing arrangement, Herbert Schutte says cows can smell barbed wire and stay away from it, avoiding injury.

they contain too high a percentage of fat.

In 1976, Herbert sold 10 beef cattle to individuals—friends or just "people who drove by."

The other 30 that he fed were sold at various weekly auctions in Kahoka, 20 miles north. Six packers (companies who slaughter and dress out beef) send their buyers to that sale.

If Herbert isn't bid the price he wants at such an auction, he brings the cattle back home in his own truck.

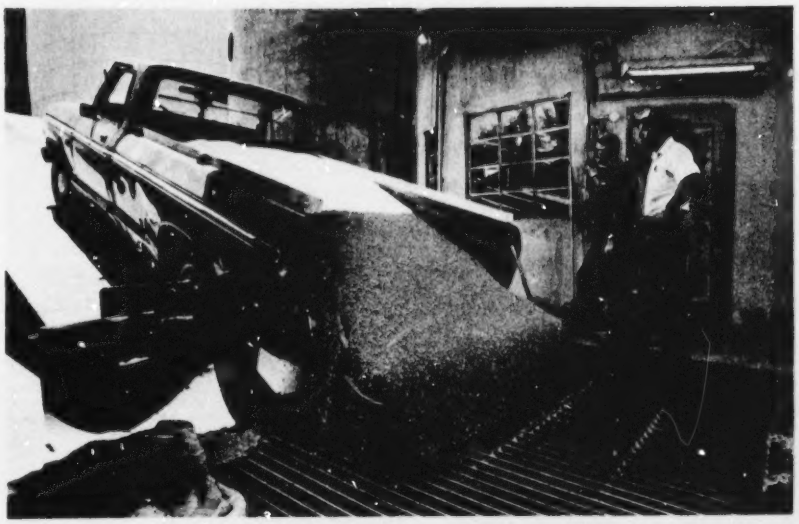
"Once I brought some home and kept them for a couple of months, but I got my price," he recalls. "Of course, it could go the other way (meaning the prices could have gone even farther down as he fed the cattle)."

Since cattle are auctioned at night in Kahoka, Herbert might stay at the sale barn until 1 o'clock in the morning. The next morning he'd still have to be up at dawn to feed the cattle and check on the hogs.

If the cattle are on pasture, he drives his pickup out to them. He calls them to the pickup so he can look them over. The cows respond quickly to his "sooooo cow, sooooo cow. Teeny. Come on Dolly." So he is able to look them over rapidly for signs of illness or injury and then check on their supply of protein supplement. Often, he drives back to the barnyard to grind some more feed to take it to the animals.

When he checks them in the evening, Herbert brings along some corn on the cob to hand feed them. It helps keep them tame, he says. And tameness makes it easier for him to inspect them, treat them, and handle them in general.

When the cattle are not on pasture but asleep in the barnyard nearer the house, Herbert and his sons must start hauling manure at 6 a.m.—usually before dawn. They toss manure



Soybeans unloaded by weighmaster Roger Spory beside the Mississippi River could end up being used in some remote corner of the world. This load of nearly 64 bushels brought Herbert Schutte a check for $604.

that has accumulated around the hay barns into a spreader, then they pull it by tractor out to the pastures to be spread on the grass, which is enriched by the nitrogen and other elements in the manure.

Other than the livestock chores, work on the Schutte farm centers around growing crops. In the fall, besides selling cattle, the Schuttes harvest the corn and soybeans and then prepare the ground for next spring's planting. If Herbert wants to harvest wheat the following July, he plants it in September or October.

Rather than leave his corn stalks on top of the ground like some farmers do, Herbert likes to plow them under in the fall on the theory that they'll break down and become part of the soil faster when under dirt.

He fertilizes his crops both in the fall and in the spring, applying nitrogen, potassium, and phosphorous to corn and just potassium to the soybeans. The beans need little nitrogen because they get some of their own nitrogen from the air.

Herbert plants his corn in May and his beans between May 20 and June 10.

If the Wyaconda River floods his land after planting—and a lot of his land lies next to the river—then Herbert plants again. In an all-out effort to catch up with favorable weather, he might stay up all night for several nights planting, the radio on his tractor picking up stations from all over the United States. All crop farmers have lights on their tractors for night work.

Herbert describes what it's like to lose a crop early in the season.

"Things never looked better for us at noon on the 23rd of June," he recalls. "And then we had a tremendous hail storm. By 3:30 we didn't have a thing." Hailstones had driven the young plants down to the ground. But Herbert replanted the soybeans the first of July and harvested 33 bushels to the acre (the national average is about 25).

As each of the crops grows, Herbert, one or more of his sons, and his dad pitch in with the necessary cultivating. Cultivating is breaking up the surface of the ground between the young plants

with sharp-toothed tools to uproot weeds and enable the ground to better absorb rain water.

Of course, all the machinery—four tractors, the grain grinder-mixer, the planters, the plows, and the disks—must be kept in working order so that crop work isn't held up by needed repair work.

That sounds like a full schedule. But it doesn't nearly fill the lives of the busy Schuttes.

Herbert and Carmie go into town a lot, perhaps on an errand for a sick neighbor or to buy fertilizer.

"We're not nearly so tied down as in dairying," Herbert said. "We're involved in a lot of things."

At mid-afternoon of one typical day, Herbert had still to inoculate a calf with an antibiotic, then check on the condition of the water tank (where the cattle drink) and finally check on the condition of the cattle themselves. Then he would return to the house in time to wash, change clothes, and eat by 6 p.m. because there was a 7:30 p.m. Knights of Columbus meeting for him and Carmie was taking a boy to a basketball game.

Herbert is chairman of the St. Patrick's parish council, so if the pipes freeze at the church, he either fixes them or sees that they are repaired. He's active in the Knights of Columbus and has helped the local Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service committee assess drought damage.

Every child in the family has been or is involved in sports. Four nights a week for 11 years, Carmie drove them to sports events. She even coached a girls' softball team for awhile.

Herbert and Carmie like to go to dances sponsored by the parish or the local Veterans of Foreign Wars, or to drive 50 miles to Quincy, Ill., to dance to the music of one of the big bands.

Occasionally they attend livestock meetings in Denver and other cities. Carmie has visited relatives in California three times.

But the lives of Herbert and Carmie have always centered on the family. Some of their children have left the farm. Janet, 23, is married and lives in Quincy, Nancy, 19, seeing that there were no eligible males left in the neighborhood, also moved to Quincy and got a job. John, 18, left for Montana to clear timber as soon as he graduated from high school. When returned, he got a job nearby building granaries.

Still at home are Gerald, 21, who not only helps his dad on the farm but works in a factory as well; Daniel, 16; Joan, 12; Ann, 9; and Barbara, 4 years old.

Perhaps the highlight of the family's year is when all of them pack up and move into a motel in July to attend and participate in the Clark County fair.

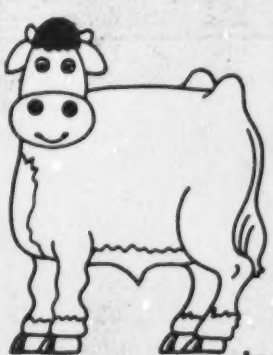
"That's our vacation," Herbert says, even though one of them has to drive back to the farm three or four times each day to feed the animals and do other chores.

GOOD THINGS FROM CATTLE

(From facts provided by the Beef Industry Council of the Meat Board)

Retail Beef
- Steaks
- Roasts
- Ground beef

Pharmaceuticals
- Rennet
- Epinephrine
- Thrombin
- Insulin
- Heparin
- TSH
- ACTH
- Cholesterol
- Estrogen
- Thyroid Extract



Variety Meats
- Liver
- Brains
- Tongue
- Ox Joints
- Kidneys
- Tripe
- Sweetbreads

Inedible By-Products
- Leather
- Sports Equipment
- Surgical Sutures
- Soap
- Cosmetics
- Buttons
- China
- Photographic film
- Sandpaper
- Violin strings
- "Camel hair" brushes
- Explosives

Edible By-Products
- Oleo stock
- Oleo oil
- Gelatin
- Marshmallows
- Canned meat
- Candies
- Natural sausage casings

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Beginning in February the children feed, weigh, lead, clean, curry, and generally take special care of special cattle that they will show and sell at the fair. They're good at it, despite Herbert's warning that "it doesn't do to win every time—you lose a lot of friends."

The Schuttes have shown four grand champion steers—three of them in succession. Gerald raised and showed one grand champion (best in the fair for that kind of animal) and his brother John, a high school senior, showed two. Both John and Dan, a sophomore in the same high school, have won other awards for good showmanship in bringing their animals before the judges.

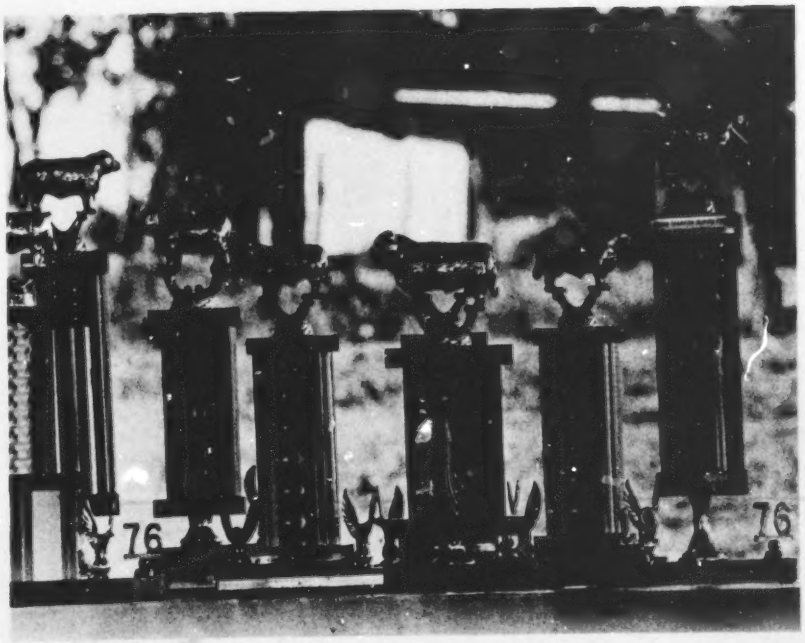
All of the children, as they grow old enough to handle cattle (if you can imagine a nine-year-old controlling 600 to 1,000 pounds of ambling bone and muscle), are given a calf by their father to raise as best they can and sell at the county fair. The youngsters compete against not only their brothers and sisters but against every other youngster in the area. The prize is both money and the pride of winning. Herbert says he hopes it will instill leadership abilities in them.

Herbert tries not to "lean all over them" to show cattle at the fair. But if they don't want to groom, feed, and show a calf, then they can't go to the fair.

"After a week of thinking about that," he says, "they always want to show an animal.

"If they win money, it goes into savings. I explain that it's like earning so many dollars a week for taking care of the animal. And it keeps them occupied."

When choice-grade steers are selling for 35 cents a pound locally, community-minded bidders in the 4-H beef auction at the county fair will bid as high as 90 cents a pound for the grand champion animal. Naturally, that encourages youngsters to do a good job. A winning animal might sell for $1,000. And the youngster can bank it for college or to buy a used pickup later.



Real animals which helped the Schutte children win these trophies at county fairs glisten almost as brightly in the sun as their metallic counterparts after being fed, washed and curried as meticulously as if they were human. Money earned from the sale of prize-winning animals helps youngsters get a college education or a pickup truck.

After 24 years of raising eight children, running the house, and driving into town, Carmie declared in 1977 that she'd stayed home long enough and now she was going to find a paying job. So she became a practical nurse at a nearby nursing home, working the night shift.

She gets home from the nursing home at 7:30 a.m., sleeps a couple of hours, gets up and works around the house until supper, then sleeps another 4 hours, gets up again, and goes to her paying job.

The extra income buys those things that are always needed around the house: a new bedroom set, a new dryer, a swing set. It costs the Schuttes $200 a year just to keep everyone's teeth checked. There are also gifts to buy for graduating relatives.

Farm operating expenses ate up $32,473 of the $36,122 brought in by the Schuttes' farm operation in 1976. That includes $3,600 in depreciation. But the cash difference of less than $4,000 represents what the Schuttes paid themselves for their labor, their management, and their investment.

In 1973, it was a lot better for the Schuttes. They netted $8,220 from farm income of $40,340.

Herbert said the way they "held their heads above water" in 1976 was through Carmie's earnings of $800 as supervisor of a community project and Herbert's earnings of $3,700 for appraising corn crops for drought damage for the local Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation committee.

"A fella told me that you should have a calf a week to spend," Herbert says. "The way things are going, you've got to have more than that, considering what the calves are bringing in."

Herbert figures his farm is worth $300,000. He's invested $50,000 in permanent improvements in the place since he bought it for $15,000. Rising land values made the difference.

It took the Schuttes 7 years to pay for their farm. And they have some savings.

"We haven't had to borrow every year to operate," Herbert explained. "But a couple of years of drought or bad prices and we'd have to borrow. It costs $10,000 a year just for family expenses. We're taking that from depreciation and using off-farm income. We didn't save any last year."

After the Depression and during World War II, a lot of folks left their farms near the Schuttes to go to work in the auto plants in Detroit. Folks are still leaving. Some are coming back and some are working in town, keeping up the farm as best they can.

Herbert says one of the reasons he stays on the farm is that "someone has to stay around." Once he helped save a neighbor who had fallen off a wagon and suffered a fractured skull. He often helps neighbors' cows deliver their calves. He's available to sing at funerals.

"I think we can survive if anybody can," Herbert said. "Diversity is the key to security."

TREND

Before 1950, there were more milk cows than beef cows in the United States. Beef cow numbers first exceeded milk cow numbers in 1954 and the difference has been increasing ever since.

Number of children around the Schutte dinner table is dwindling. Those who have left return often and bring friends or a husband. Clockwise from Herbert Schutte are: son Daniel, daughter Janet, her husband Danny Doelman, her sister Joan (nearly hidden), Herbert's wife Carmie, and daughters Barb and Nancy.

THE SCHUTTE FARM, 1977

Farm Expenses	
Hired labor (including son)	$ 3,201
Repairs, maintenance	3,860
Interest	273
Feed purchases	2,026
Seeds	1,011
Fertilizer, lime, chemicals	9,298
Machine hire	2,203
Supplies	1,272
Veterinary fees, medicine	327
Gasoline, fuel, oil	6,285
Taxes	1,465
Insurance	1,436
Utilities	574
Other	618
	$33,849

Farm Income	
Sale of cattle	$ 9,430
Sale of hogs	2,777
Sale of grain	21,047
Co-op dividends	331
Disaster payments	1,311
Gas tax return	1,135
	$36,031

Other income would include $2,092 from the sale of cows, sows and a bull, which is taxed as capital gains, and $9,624 that Herbert and Carmie earned off the farm.

Not included above would be depreciation at $4,547, plus Herbert's management, labor, and return on investment.

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U. S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE : 1978

Lawrence Schutte was a mule skinner and horse trainer in Europe in World War I. After 27 months overseas, including 275 days on the line hauling ammunition, he came home, to drive a team of mules in parades in Washington, D.C. and New York City. People crowded 20 deep for miles and miles to see the parades.

Prints of these photographs may be obtained from the Photography Division, Office of Governmental and Public Affairs, Room 4405-S, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250. Limited numbers are available free to news media. Others pay a small fee.

December 1978